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ABSTRACT

The role of historically Black colleges is discussed in relation to their ability to offer educational alternatives and options. Some characteristics of the Black colleges are that 42 percent are located in cities with less than 50,000 people, while fewer than 20 percent are located in cities with populations in excess of 500,000. Black colleges offer relatively few advanced degrees, especially at the PhD. level. The majority of Black colleges have religious affiliation with one of the branches of Methodism and 84 percent of all accredited Black colleges are in the southern association (as compared to 24 percent of all colleges). The student population of these colleges is basically Afro-American/Black. Open admissions policies are generally the rule and the majority of entrants do complete their baccalaureate at historically Black institutions. Nearly 6 out of 10 students are enrolled in education, business, or social science majors. The average cost for tuition and room and board compares with that of other colleges, and financial need is judged by similar criteria. The author advocates the continuation of the historically Black college as it provides a multi-ethnic/racial context for education and a laboratory for developing nations and peoples whose life styles are more like the environments of students at Black colleges. (PHR)

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SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES

Much has been written about the historically Black Institutions. The majority of them have been a part of the American higher education picture for over one hundred years. When no one else would provide the descendents of slaves and descendents of slave owners a chance to be educated in an environment free from racial restrictions, these historically Black Colleges provided that education. For many years both church related and public institutions provided this educational opportunity.

Today, amid the many questions about the validity and necessity of operating these colleges, there are still some persons who would prefer to utilize their energies charting the new arenas open to these institutions. The historically Black institutions do have a charge to offer an alternative to the existing plan of higher education. Since all opportunities and options should be available to all peoples in America, then the historical Black Colleges can provide that alternative and that option.

As these colleges begin to plan their strategies and their offerings as opportunities for alternatives, it is imperative that an understanding of what they are become the base line.

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This is crucial to any plan of "becoming". The following is an attempt to analyze institutional data which is collected by The American College Testing Program. After identifying all the historical Black Institutions, it is possible to offer these characteristics:

42%	Are located in cities and towns with less than 50,000 inhabitants.
12%	Are located in cities with populations between 50,000 and 99,999.
28%	Are located in cities with populations between 100,000 and 499,999.
18%	Are located in cities with populations in excess of 500,000.

When one compares the historically Black Colleges to All other colleges one can observe this about All colleges:

11%	Under 50,000
29%	50,000 - 99,999
31%	100,000-499,999
29%	Over 500,000

The majority of Black Colleges 42% are in areas with populations under 50,000 while the data for All Colleges has only 11% in that category. At the other end of the chart 18% of the Black Colleges are from areas with over 500,000 while nearly twice that amount 29% of All Colleges are from areas over 500,000.

Looking at the areas in another way and particularly as one looks at urban needs and rural needs, it is interesting to observe that:

48%	Are located in Urban Areas
20%	Are located in Towns and Country Areas
16%	Are located in suburban Areas
16%	Are located in Rural Areas

All of the historically Black Colleges surveyed offered the baccalaureate degree. Looking at other kinds of degrees and programs:

BLACK		ALL
13%	Career oriented programs not primarily for college credit.	16%
38%	Associate degree	38%
36%	Masters degree	51%
10%	First Professional degree (Law, Med., etc.)	15%
3%	Ph.D. or equivalent	18%

While remaining close in all other degree and program areas, Black Colleges fall extremely low in the offerings of the Ph.D. or equivalent.

Looking at affiliation, the following provides an interesting comparative background:

BLACK		ALL
39%	Public	32%
13%	Private, no religious affiliation, Private, Religious Affiliation.	27%

BLACK		ALL
7%	Baptist	5%
0%	Jewish	0%
0%	Latter Day Saints	0%
0%	Lutheran	2%
18%	Methodist	5%
7%	Presbyterian	3%
2%	Roman Catholic	13%
2%	United Church of Christ	1%
13%	Other	11%

The majority of Black Colleges have religious affiliations with one of the branches of Methodism (i.e., AME, AME Zion, CME, or United Methodist) while the Roman Catholic Church has the largest affiliation with All Colleges. An interesting side light is that there is an equal church affiliation of Baptist and Presbyterian with the Black Colleges. All of the Black Colleges are accredited or recognized candidates for accreditation. The breakdown by regional associations is as follows:

BLACK		ALL
8%	Middle States Association	20%
0%	New England Association	10%
8%	North Central Association	33%
0%	Northwest Association	4%
84%	Southern Association	24%
0%	Western Association	7%
0%	None of the above	2%

Looking at some of the characteristics of the students at historically Black Colleges and at All Colleges, there are some interesting comparisons. Looking first at the Freshman Class of 1976-77:

BLACK		ALL
31%	Out-of-state	32%
69%	Live in campus housing	68%
72%	Return as Sophomores	76%

With all the discussions on retention, it is important to note how the Black Colleges compare with All Colleges. Because this section allowed for more than one check, the total was not intended to add up to 100%.

The racial-ethnic background of students in the freshman class is as follows:

BLACK		ALL
91%	Afro American/Black	9%
0%	Native American	1%
4%	Caucasian/White	72%
0%	Mexican American/Chicano	1%
0%	Oriental Americans	1%
0%	Puerto Rican/Spanish Speaking	1%
5%	Other	3%

When it comes to freshman admissions policies, the data is as follows:

BLACK			ALL
5%	1.	Highly selective (Top 10%)	5%
5%	2.	Selective (Top 25%)	18%
16%	3.	Traditional (Top 50%)	19%
48%	4.	Liberal (Some from lower half)	43%
31%	5.	Open (All high school grads)	15%

Comparing Black Colleges with All Colleges, one sees that 10% of the Black Colleges have prospective students from the upper 25% of their high shcool graduating class as compared to 23% of All Colleges. At the other end of the spectrum, 79% of the Black Colleges are more liberal and open in their attempts to provide an education to students as compared to 48% of All Colleges.

Both Black Colleges and All Colleges are relatively alike in having requirements for admissions and the same for out-of-state students as for in-state students. Black Colleges 90-10 and All Colleges 88-12.

While testing and admissions are usually not discussed in some circles, it is interesting to observe how this relates to both Black Colleges and All Colleges:

BLACK		ALL
18%	Only ACT accepted or required	13%
1?%	Only SAT accepted or required	10%
42%	ACT or SAT equally acceptable	44%
16%	ACT prefered; SAT accepted	15%
13%	SAT prefered; ACT accepted	13%
3%	One or more of CEEB Achievements	8%
5%	Other test results required	5%
1%	No test desired or required	7%

By and large, Tests are more a part of the admissions requirement for Black Colleges than for All Colleges. This is seen when 99% of the Black Colleges want some form of test results while 83% of All Colleges want some form of test results in admissions.

Now that the role of testing has been identified as playing a role in the admissions policy of Black Colleges, what has been the academic characteristic of this and what type of test scores do we have on record from the most recent class?

BLACK		ALL
12	Mean ACT Composite	20
336	Mean SAT Verbal	474
349	Mean SAT Math	502

Since Test scores are only one factor in the decision on students entering and succeeding in the initial year of college, the following is an indication of the second factor, high school grade point average.

The freshmen year is a fairly good predictor of a students retention capabilities. Understanding there are other factors that colleges must identify and look for, it is interesting to examine high school GPAs and first year college GPAs:

BLACK		ALL
2.4	Average High School GPA	3.0
2.3	Average First year college GPA	2.6

Having introduced the idea of retention and in preparation for a special workshop in this area, it is well to note the close comparisons between Black Colleges and All Colleges in this area. By a slight margin of one per cent Black Colleges have a better retention record than All Colleges, 60% to 59%.

Another interesting statistic show that 24% of graduates from Black Colleges go on to graduate and professional schools as compared to 33% for All Colleges. This is interesting in light of concerns about the quality of Black and non-Black students entering graduate and professional schools.

Looking into some program activities one can observe the following about admissions and placement programs for freshmen:

BLACK		ALL
5%	Admissions for Fall term only	76%
54%	Early Admissions	76%
26%	Deferred Admissions	49%
15%	Candidates reply date agreement	25%
64%	Special remedial skill courses	46%
46%	Honors or accelerated courses	49%
59%	Credit by examination	81%
48%	Advanced Placement	83%
21%	Independent study	60%

It is quite evident that Black Colleges are in need of examining their responses to these kinds of activities. This is even more important as are plans to develop program activities to meet the needs of students during the next score of years. Areas like credit by exam advanced placement and independent study will certainly need to be examined since they fall so far behind All Colleges.

A very close area to the activities described above are the programs available. Note that the colleges have the following:

BLACK		ALL
92%	Sororities or Fraternities	51%
3%	Some with residence facilities	25%
82%	Cooperative education program	44%
31%	Foreign study	60%
85%	Summer Sessions	81%

BLACK		ALL
31%	Air Force ROTC	18%
57%	Army ROTC	33%
15%	Navy ROTC	6%
3%	ROTC Required	1%

The academic calendar of Black Colleges provide an interesting comparison to All Colleges:

30%	1. Traditional Semester	16%
45%	2. Early Semester (Before Exams)	40%
12%	3. Quarter (3 or 12 weeks each)	17%
3%	4. Trimester	4%
5%	5. 4-1-4	16%
5%	6. Other	7%

Black Colleges are now mostly Early Semester, Traditional, or Quarter as compared to All Colleges being Early Semester, Quarter and a tie between 4-1-4 and Traditional Semester.

Looking at the kinds of programs and majors that are now being taken:

1%	Agriculture	1%
19%	Business	14%
1%	Communication	2%
22%	Education	14%
2%	Engineering	4%
3%	Fine/Applied Arts	8%

1%	Foreign Languages	1%
5%	Health Professions	8%
1%	Home Economics	1%
3%	Humanities	11%
6%	Mathematics/Physical Sciences	8%
17%	Social Science	14%
1%	Trades/Technical	2%
8%	Other	8%

Tuition and fees for Black Colleges compared to All Colleges are as follows:

BLACK		ALL
$1,293	Resident	$1,804
$1,596	Out-of-State	$2,090

Looking at room and board facilities, 95% of the Black Colleges and 87% of All Colleges have some form of campus housing and meals available for their students, 49% of the Black students and 63% of All Colleges require freshmen to live in housing provided by the institution. The average room and board cost for an academic year in facilities provided by the institution is $1,106 for Black Colleges and $1,343 for All Colleges. Black Colleges tend to fail in the arena, competitively with All Colleges in both tuition costs as well as room and board costs.

Looking further at financial needs of students, the following information shows the forms students complete as the vehicle for receiving campus based as well as federal student financial assistance:

BLACK		ALL
4%	Only FFS (ACT)	7%
36%	Only PCS (CSS)	36%
25%	Either FFS or PCS	14%
7%	Prefer FFS, accept PCS	8%
21%	Prefer PCS, accept FFS	27%
7%	Other need analysis	6%
--	None	2%

In relationship to actual awards, 78% of accepted freshmen at Black Colleges with need were offered some financial assistance as compared to 75% for accepted freshmen with need at All Colleges. Similarly, 64% of accepted freshmen with need at Black Colleges received aid to meet full need as compared to 62% at All Colleges.

Thirteen percent of the resident freshmen are given priority over non-resident freshmen in financial aid awards at Black Colleges as compared to 5% for All Colleges.

One final note about student assistance and student employment. 49% of freshmen at Black Colleges and 41% of freshmen at All Colleges have some type employment during the academic year. This is further amplified to show that

75% of the Black Colleges and 83% of All Colleges provide a service to help undergraduates find on/or off campus work during the academic year.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

By and large, the historicallly Black Colleges compare favorable with All Colleges in most facets associated with American Higher Education. Some key areas of difference and concern provide opportunities for expanding educational offerings during the coming years. These are: (1) The populations under 100,000. (2) The strange apparently opposite picture of many of these colleges being located within these towns and cities as vital economic factors and civic factors in the lives of these towns and cities. (3) The small number of Black Colleges involved in continuing education toward the terminal degree. (4) The historical life blood in education provided by Black churches from a time when their memberships were non-college trained to a present day of slightly more college trained members. (5) All of the Black Colleges identified in this study are either accredited or recognized candidates for accreditation by their regionally accrediting agency. (6) These colleges do serve students who are basically Afro-American/Black. (7) The historically Black Colleges have been and still are liberal and open regarding admissions policies. (8) Tests are desired or required at the majority of Black Colleges. (9) The majority of entrants do complete their baccalaureate degree at the historically Black Colleges. (10) While Black

Colleges are liberal and open in admissions policies, they tend to be conservative in relations to credit by exam, advanced placement, foreign study, and independent study opportunities. (11) Black Colleges have more ROTC programs on their campuses than other colleges. (12) Most Black Colleges have either Early Semester or Traditional Semester academic calendar. (13) Education, Business, and Social Science are the families of programs and majors for nearly 6 out of 10 students enrolled at historically Black Colleges.

Since financial aid is so important to the future of both student and institutions, it is important to observe that: (1) The average cost for tuition as well as room and board at Black Colleges is not that much different from other colleges and (2) Awarding of financial aid to accepted freshmen with judged need at Black Colleges is similar to that at other colleges.

This is a beginning in an identification of Black Colleges. For over a hundred years, most have provided an education for young people who would not have been educated. Both Black church members and Black taxpayers shared in the financial support needed by these institutions. A generation of Blacks whose educational levels were far below what they are today created the Black Colleges and forged the dream that has enabled most of todays Black leadership to be realized. A very frightening spectre hovers over the future of these colleges. Could it be that the most educated generation of Blacks will give up the legacy of an education at a Black College and prevent future

generations from having that definite alternative in the pursuit of higher education in America today? Shall Black Colleges be placed on the list of endangered species? Or shall this generation rise up and provided philosophical as well as statistically relevant support for insuring that an education is available to Black students and all other students interested in pursueing an education in a multi-ethnic/racial context with designs to promote development from the view of the common man's hope and belief in America. With philosophical and statistical support for that ideal, Black Colleges can continue to justify their existence as key components in the vast socio-communications network which spans the technological universe ahead. They can, as only they can, provide the laboratory for developing nations and for the masses of people whose life styles are more like the environments of students at Black Colleges. This must be done. To do less is to fail. To do less is to curse unborn generations yet to have their "day in the sun". Only the future will be able to document "For when the bell tolls".

Bob Clayton